

# The Trust Guru - Articles in MSTODAY 10/25/06

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Though most of what Filipinos know of Austria is limited to Julie Andrews Sound of Music, Austrias proprietary claim to music goes beyond the Hollywood productions. It is the homeland of the great composers [Brahms](#), [Haydn](#), [Mahler](#), [Mozart](#), [Schubert](#) and the [Strausses](#)--both father and son. My personal favorite, German-born [Ludwig van Beethoven](#), lived in Vienna for most of his adult life.

A number of Filipino heroes have visited Austria. I have space to mention just a couple. Jose Rizal, together with Maximo Viola, arrived in Vienna on May 20, 1887 and stayed at the Hotel Metropole. They toured the city, including the Museum, for three days, during the last of which Rizal was interviewed by a Mr. Alder of the Estra Blatt, a local newspaper. He and Viola then proceeded to Salzburg on the 25<sup>th</sup>, leaving for Munich the following day.

The other is Gabriel Ureta who I also consider a hero assuming the story as told to Thielma Leonor "Boots" Tirol, daughter of Leon Hontiveros Tirol, and published in the Austrian-Philippine Web site is, true.

The story starts sometime in the 300 years of Spanish rule in a river somewhere in Aklan, either in Tangalan or Ibajay, where no bridge spanned to cross it. One day, a Spanish official wanted to get to the other side without getting wet, and, thus, as was the practice of the colonizers, conscripted Gabriel Ureta to carry him across on his shoulders. As Filipino and Spaniard reached mid-point, Gabriel threw off the load on his shoulders and, scampering to the other side, fled Aklan. He headed for a pier, stowed away in a boat and eventually ended up a seaman calling on various ports. He got to Austria, and fell in love with the place, particularly the mountains of Tirol state, in the west near Salzburg.

Tirol state considers itself the heart of the Alps and is a paradise for hikers, mountain climbers and skiers: 710 of its innumerable mountain peaks are over 3,000 meters high. The highest peak in Tirol is the Wildspitze (3,774 meters) in the Oetz Valley Alps. Tirol also shares the Grossglockner which at 3,797 meters is the highest mountain in Austria.

At Tirol, Gabriel stayed, no one can say how long, but, like all Filipinos, eventually longed to go back to his country. If he came home carrying his family name Ureta, he was a dead man. So, he changed Ureta to Tirol after the mountains he loved so much and returned a free man.

No one bothers to relate what happened to the Spanish official, but his fate and Gabriel Tirols return undetected, in my view, explains why Spain lost the revolution to the Filipinos.

The present trade between Austria and the Philippines reflects the relative economic development of the two countries. The main exports of Austria to the Philippines are machinery, particularly special machinery and electronic parts, followed by semi-finished goods such as pulp and paper, refractories and chemicals, specifically pharmaceutical products and its raw materials. On the other hand, the bulk of Philippine exports to Austria is composed mainly of electronic goods and devices, data processing machines and equipment as well as garments.

Austrian companies also invest here. As mentioned in an earlier item (Sept. 20, The Trust Guru, The Manila Standard Today), RZB holds, approximately, 10 percent of the equity of Export and Industry Bank. Further, I had the opportunity of assisting in the organization and governance of Tann Philippines Inc. for Tann-Papier, a member of Trierenberg Holdings based in Traun, Austria. This group has a unit that once upon a time sourced the paper for the Philippine peso. I am certain there are many other Austria-linked companies out there.

But the affinity of both countries lies not so much in economics but in culture. Presently, there are

a number of organizations on both sides of the globe dedicated to enhancing the relations between Austrians and Filipinos. The advisability of speaking only from personal knowledge, however, limits me to the Philippine-Austrian Cultural Society, Inc.

PACS was founded on May 24, 1962 by Filipinos, Lourdes Borja, Artemio P. Moral, Dr. Antonio Ganiza, Eufemia Evangelista, Dr. Jose N. Dualan, Greg Feliciano, Helen Mendoza, and Austrians, Gryde, Kurt Kessler, Rev. Karl Steinmetz, Dr. Eugene Stransky, Susanne Winternitz. Its main goal is to promote, between the Philippines and Austria, the exchange of cultural information and sharing of knowledge in the various fields of the arts, such as music, theater, architecture, history as well as the appreciation of each others colorful ethnic heritage. Over the years, it has assisted in the exchange of Austrian and Filipino artists and in supporting the local performances of the traveling Vienna Boys Choir, not to mention celebrating in a Filipino way a monthly Heurigen, the Austrian tasting festival at the first wine harvest.

This years officers include Washington Sycip as chairman of the board and Stella Gonzalez as president. Hermann Fidler and Gnter Rametsteiner are vice-presidents and Hans-Jrgen Springer is the treasurer. He is assisted by director Ramon Lacson who is in charge of fund raising. Philippine media is attended to by Lynne Ocampo and Dr. Walter Hoefle connects PACS internationally.

To Austria and the Philippines, Prost! and Mabuhay!